

**AMENDED CLAIM SET:**

1. (original) A negative electrode material for non-aqueous electrolyte secondary batteries, wherein a negative electrode active material containing a lithium ion-occluding and releasing material which has been treated with an organosilicon base surface treating agent is surface coated with a conductive coating.

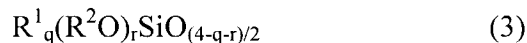
2. (original) The negative electrode material of claim 1 wherein said lithium ion-occluding and releasing material is selected from the group consisting of silicon, a composite dispersion of silicon and silicon dioxide, a silicon oxide represented by the general formula  $\text{SiO}_x$  wherein  $1.0 \leq x < 1.6$ , and a mixture thereof.

3. (original) The negative electrode material of claim 1 wherein said organosilicon base surface treating agent is at least one member selected from the group consisting of a silane coupling agent or a (partial) hydrolytic condensate thereof, a silylating agent, and a silicone resin.

4. (original) The negative electrode material of claim 3 wherein said organosilicon base surface treating agent is at least one member selected from the group consisting of a silane coupling agent of the general formula (1) or a (partial) hydrolytic condensate thereof, a silylating agent of the general formula (2), and a silicone resin of the general formula (3),



wherein R is a monovalent organic group, Y is a hydrolyzable group or hydroxyl group, n is an integer of 1 to 4, p is an integer of 1 to 3, L is an integer of 2 to 4, and m is an integer of 1 to 3,



wherein  $\text{R}^1$  is hydrogen or a substituted or unsubstituted monovalent hydrocarbon group of 1 to 10 carbon atoms,  $\text{R}^2$  is hydrogen or a substituted or unsubstituted monovalent hydrocarbon group

of 1 to 6 carbon atoms, q and r each are 0 or a positive number satisfying  $0 \leq q \leq 2.5$ ,  $0.01 \leq r \leq 3$ , and  $0.5 \leq q+r \leq 3$ .

5. (original) The negative electrode material of claim 1 wherein said conductive coating is a carbon coating.

6. (original) The negative electrode material of claim 5 wherein the amount of carbon coated is 5 to 70% by weight of said negative electrode active material.

7. (original) A method of preparing a negative electrode material for non-aqueous electrolyte secondary batteries, comprising the step of heat treating a negative electrode active material containing a lithium ion-occluding and releasing material which has been treated with an organosilicon base surface treating agent, in an atmosphere containing an organic material gas or vapor at a temperature in the range of 500 to 1400°C.

8. (original) The method of claim 7 wherein the organic material gas or vapor is thermally decomposed to form graphite in a non-oxidizing atmosphere at a temperature in the range of 500 to 1400°C.

9. (original) A lithium ion secondary battery comprising the negative electrode material of claim 1 as a negative electrode active material.

10. (new) The negative electrode material of claim 1, wherein said lithium ion-occluding and releasing material is a metallic silicon powder having an average particle size of 3.5  $\mu\text{m}$  and a BET specific surface area of 4  $\text{m}^2/\text{g}$  or a silicon oxide powder  $\text{SiO}_{1.02}$  having an average particle size of 1.1  $\mu\text{m}$  and a BET specific surface area of 10.3  $\text{m}^2/\text{g}$ , and said surface treating agent is vinyltrimethoxysilane,  $\gamma$ -methacryloxypropyl-trimethoxysilane, or hexamethyldisilazane.